

23 June 1994

“US, New Zealand Look Forward to Stronger Ties.” President Clinton’s remarks with New Zealand Ambassador to the US L John Wood at Wood’s White House credentials presentation ceremony. (940623)

Text: 06/23/94 U.S., NEW ZEALAND LOOK FORWARD TO STRONGER TIES (Texts: White House credentials ceremony) (1720) Washington —

While receiving New Zealand’s newly appointed ambassador to the United States June 23, President Clinton said he hoped the new high-level contacts between the two countries might build a foundation over time for the resumption of the security ties.

In a reply to a statement made by Ambassador L. John Wood, the president said: “We share your hope that the new channels for senior dialogue we have established, along with the sweeping changes in the international environment since the mid-1980s, will lead to a strengthening in the close friendship and cooperation that have traditionally marked relations between our two democracies.”

In presenting his credentials, Wood said: “Mr. President, your Administration’s review of relations with New Zealand and the decision to restore dialogue with senior civilian and military officials was welcomed by the New Zealand Government. We recognize that there are still some constraints in place. But my Government believes that your decision has laid an excellent foundation for moving forward to broaden and deepen our ties.”

Following are the official texts of remarks by the ambassador and the president’s reply:

(begin Ambassador Wood text) Mr. President: I have the honour to present to you the Letter of Credence from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II accrediting me as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of New Zealand to the United States of America. I have also to present to you the Letter of Recall of my predecessor, Mr. Denis McLean.

My first duty, Mr. President, is to bring you a message of goodwill and friendship from the Government and people of New Zealand.

Mr. President, the history our two countries share in common goes back to the days when the first American whalers and sealers visited New Zealand in the late 18th century. But it has been during this century that the depth of ties between New Zealand and the United States has been forged, in particular in the great conflicts of this century, where our forces have stood side by side in every major confrontation.

We now share a broad based relationship founded on strong bonds of democratic values, an expanding economic relationship, and the natural warmth and affection between peoples of the two countries. We are partners in the development of the Asia-Pacific region and we share the objective of seeking a more secure world with universal respect for the principles of international law.

In moving with a changing world, Mr. President, we are searching for a way to manage the new problems and challenges of the post-Cold War era. Whether it is working together in the United Nations Security Council, as we have been pleased to do during our current term, or contributing to U.N. peacekeeping operations, we believe there is an important agenda that unites our two nations.

In this new world the very essence of security is changing. The issues have become increasingly complex, including economic and environmental factors. In this situation we need more than ever to work in cooperation with our traditional friends. Global problems by their very nature demand global solutions. From halting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to protecting the world’s climate and atmosphere, large countries and small share similar interests in the development and acceptance of international norms for responsible behaviour. You will find New Zealand a willing partner in tackling all of these issues.

Mr. President, your Administration’s review of relations with New Zealand and the decision to restore dialogue with senior civilian and military officials was welcomed by the New Zealand Government. We recognize that there are still some constraints in place. But my Government believes that your decision has laid an excellent foundation for moving forward to broaden and deepen our ties.

In particular, I would note our vital interest in the Asia-Pacific region. Through your leadership the first Leaders Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum was held in Seattle last year. We stand ready to work more intensively with you to make APEC a real force for trade liberalization and cooperation.

The United States has forged ahead to build the world’s largest free trade zone. We look forward to discussing further with your Administration prospects for closer cooperation between the United States, NAFTA countries and New Zealand. We believe that it is in the mutual interests of the countries of the Pacific Rim to reach out across the Pacific to keep markets open and economies growing.

In our immediate neighborhood, as the United States regrettably reduces its development assistance efforts in the South Pacific, you will find New Zealand seeking to promote a continued constructive US presence in the region.

Mr. President, both our nations are embarked upon important programmes of domestic economic and social reform. We are following with interest your moves to address longstanding problems in the areas of health care reform, welfare policy, crime and the effectiveness of government.

For our part, we have since 1984 pursued a dramatic programme of restructuring. This has transferred our economy from one of zero growth and high inflation to one of strong growth, price stability and business confidence. American investment in New Zealand has quintupled during this period as a result.

We have also been “reinventing government” to streamline the bureaucracy and improve its management. We see opportunities to work together, learning from your experience and sharing what we have learnt during the last decade.

Mr. President, in closing may I reiterate the very high value which my Government attaches to its relationship with the United States. It is a great honour to have the opportunity during my appointment as Ambassador to the United States of America, to further a relationship based on the fundamental values we share.

(end Ambassador Wood text) (begin President Clinton text) Mr. Ambassador: I have the honor of accepting the Letter of Credence accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of New Zealand to the United States of America, and I hereby acknowledge the Letter of Recall of your distinguished predecessor, Mr. Denis McLean.

Few nations have enjoyed closer bonds than New Zealand and the United States. We have stood together in virtually every major conflict this century in defense of our democratic ideals. Only this month at the stirring commemoration of the Normandy landings we were reminded once again of what our democracies can accomplish in a time of ultimate trial.

As you rightly observed, our two nations share a common agenda in seeking to manage the new problems and challenges of the post-Cold War era. On both the regional and the global levels, our energies and imaginations will be taxed to the fullest. At the same time, these challenges present enormous opportunities for joint action to frame a new pattern of relationships based on peace, prosperity, and democracy.

Within our own region, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum holds out great promise as a mechanism for promoting the well-being of our two peoples. I was privileged to host the first APEC Leaders meeting in Seattle last November, which Prime Minister Bolger attended. I welcomed his constructive suggestions at that gathering. We greatly value New Zealand's strong support for APEC's objective of creating an open trading and investment regime in the Asia Pacific. I look forward to working again with the Prime Minister and the other leaders at the coming APEC meeting in Bogor, to build on the foundation established in Seattle.

We look forward as well to cooperating with New Zealand and other regional partners in developing regional security dialogue through such mechanisms as the ASEAN Regional Forum.

The United States and New Zealand also have common interests on a broad range of global issues. We salute New Zealand's performance during its current term on the United Nations Security Council, and we have been pleased to coordinate closely with your Government on Council issues ranging from Iraqi sanctions to the North Korean nuclear program. New Zealand's contributions to global peacekeeping have been very impressive in light of the size of its population; your continued deployment of forces in Somalia and your decision to dispatch a large contingent of troops to Bosnia reflect the strength of New Zealand's commitment to building a stable and secure international environment. We value as well New Zealand's support for effective programs to preserve the global environment and provide reproductive health care for those who need it.

On key international economic issues, the United States and New Zealand have cooperated closely in the effort to liberalize global trade. As a prominent member of the Cairns Group of agricultural exporting countries, New Zealand contributed greatly to the successful conclusion of the GATT Uruguay Round in December 1993. Our bilateral trading relationship is equally strong, and we look forward to even greater growth under our Trade and Investment Framework Agreement.

You have alluded, Mr. Ambassador, to my Administration's review of relations with New Zealand. We share your hope that the new channels for senior dialogue we have established, along with the sweeping changes in the international environment since the mid-1980s, will lead to a strengthening in the close friendship and cooperation that have traditionally marked relations between our two democracies. In particular, we would hope they might build a foundation over time for the resumption of the security ties that previously served our mutual interests so effectively.

Mr. Ambassador, allow me to welcome you to Washington. I, along with all officials of my government, look forward to working closely with you as you carry out your important responsibilities as New Zealand's ambassador to the United States. I hope your assignment to Washington is rewarding and productive both personally and professionally.

In closing, Mr. Ambassador, let me recall your remarks about the two centuries of history our countries share, going back to the visits of American whalers and sealers to New Zealand in the 18th Century. The enduring friendship and cooperation between our peoples are rooted in our shared values: freedom, democracy, and a fundamental commitment to human rights and the rule of law. I can think of no firmer basis on which our two nations might meet together the challenges of the next century.

(end President Clinton text) NNN